



## ***Global Activities***

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In addition to hosting visitors from around the globe who are interested in learning more about its programs, OWOW is actively involved in a number of international initiatives to address issues that transcend our nation's borders.

### **The London Convention**

Adopted in 1972, the London Convention (LC) established a global system to protect the marine environment from pollution caused by ocean dumping. During the 1990s, the LC banned incineration at sea and the dumping of industrial wastes and low-level radioactive wastes. In 1992 the parties to the LC began a comprehensive review of the Convention. This review resulted in the 1996 Protocol, a new treaty that is separate from the LC. The Protocol sets forth a regime that is more stringent, more comprehensive, and more protective of the marine environment than the LC. The United States signed the Protocol in 1996 and is working toward its ratification. Although the Protocol is not yet in effect, the United States is already consistent with its substantive provisions.

### **Cartagena Convention**

The Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (the Cartagena Convention), which was adopted in 1983, is the only legally binding environmental treaty for the Wider Caribbean. It has several protocols addressing issues such as oil spills, specially protected areas and wildlife, and pollution from land-based sources. In 1999 efforts culminated in the adoption of the land-based protocol. OWOW has been involved

in the drafting, negotiations, and implementation of the Cartagena Convention. OWOW has also funded pilot projects in the region to implement the land-based sources protocol, incorporated implementing language into EPA regulations, and assisted in research efforts in the Wider Caribbean.

### **MARPOL**

The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) was created to minimize waterborne and airborne pollution from cargo vessels operating in U.S. and international waters. OWOW has provided technical support and assisted in negotiations to address emissions from ships (adopted in 1998), anti-foulants, invasive species carried in ballast water tanks, and garbage (amended in 2000).

### **Convention on Biodiversity**

The Convention on Biodiversity was adopted at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) as a means to conserve global biological diversity. Although the United States has not yet ratified the Convention, the U.S. Government has been an active participant in Convention activities. OWOW has provided technical expertise, especially in the ecosystem areas of marine and coastal diversity and freshwater diversity.

### **Washington Declaration on Land-Based Sources**

More than 100 countries adopted the Global Program for Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based

Activities in 1995. OWOW was intimately involved in the planning and hosting of this conference and continues to work toward the protection of the marine environment from land-based pollutant sources through its implementing programs.

### **International Year of the Ocean**

OWOW coordinated EPA's activities supporting the 1998 celebration, *International Year of the Ocean*. This international campaign to heighten awareness of ocean and coastal issues has led to an increase in research monies for ocean issues, increased coordination among agencies, and heightened public awareness. Highlights of this year-long interagency effort in-

cluded the National Oceans Conference in Monterey, California; identification of national priorities for ocean and coastal waters; and implementation of high-priority actions.

### **The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands**

Celebrating 30 years of worldwide wetlands protection efforts, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands boasts 123 member nations that have identified more than 1,000 wetland sites of international importance and spurred a vast array of technical research, policy development, and support networks. OWOW participates in the Convention's triennial meetings as an official member of the U.S. delegation, which is led by the State Department and the Fish and Wildlife Service. OWOW has been particularly active in providing information resources for countries developing wetlands protection and management policies.

### **INTECOL: International Wetlands Conference**

Every 4 years, the world's top wetland scientists, policymakers, and managers convene to share information on the full spectrum of wetlands issues. OWOW participates in this global gathering to share its progress on the watershed approach, wetland policy advances, and information resources. The most recent conference was held in 2000 in Quebec. OWOW co-sponsored the event, led several panel sessions, taught technical mini-courses on wetlands, staffed an EPA wetlands information booth, and provided practical wetlands management observations.



*“When we try to pick out anything by itself in nature we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.” — John Muir*



Steve Delaney,  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

## The Challenges Ahead

Our rivers, lakes, estuaries, and wetlands are the lifeblood of our nation. They provide a variety of services from drinking water to recreational opportunities to transportation and food. As a nation we are beginning to recognize that clean water is intrinsically tied to our quality of life. Americans are deeply concerned about their waters, and OWOW has witnessed strong public support for efforts to keep them clean and safe.

Although much progress has been made, many challenges remain. OWOW will strive to be at the forefront in helping the country meet these challenges. OWOW will continue its efforts to clean up polluted waterbodies, restore degraded habitats, and address new and growing threats such as urban sprawl and invasive species. These efforts will take creativity, commitment, and the involvement of many partners.

Over the long term, securing healthy and sustainable aquatic ecosystems will require strategies that make greater use of market mechanisms; tap the energy and perspective of state and local stewardship groups, industry, and government; and provide a foundation of fair, flexible, and effective regulation. As we begin this new millennium, OWOW firmly believes that a watershed framework offers the best opportunity for bringing people and strategies together to address the challenges ahead.

### Sprawl and Watersheds

Sprawl has been identified as one of the leading causes of degradation in many watersheds. Development activities, especially unplanned growth, can result in increased storm water runoff with higher and faster flood peaks, streambank erosion, habitat loss, and groundwater recharge problems. Once 10 percent of a watershed is developed or paved over, streambeds start to degrade because of increased runoff. Some states and local communities are embracing “smart growth” and taking initiatives to protect and restore streams and adjacent floodplains.

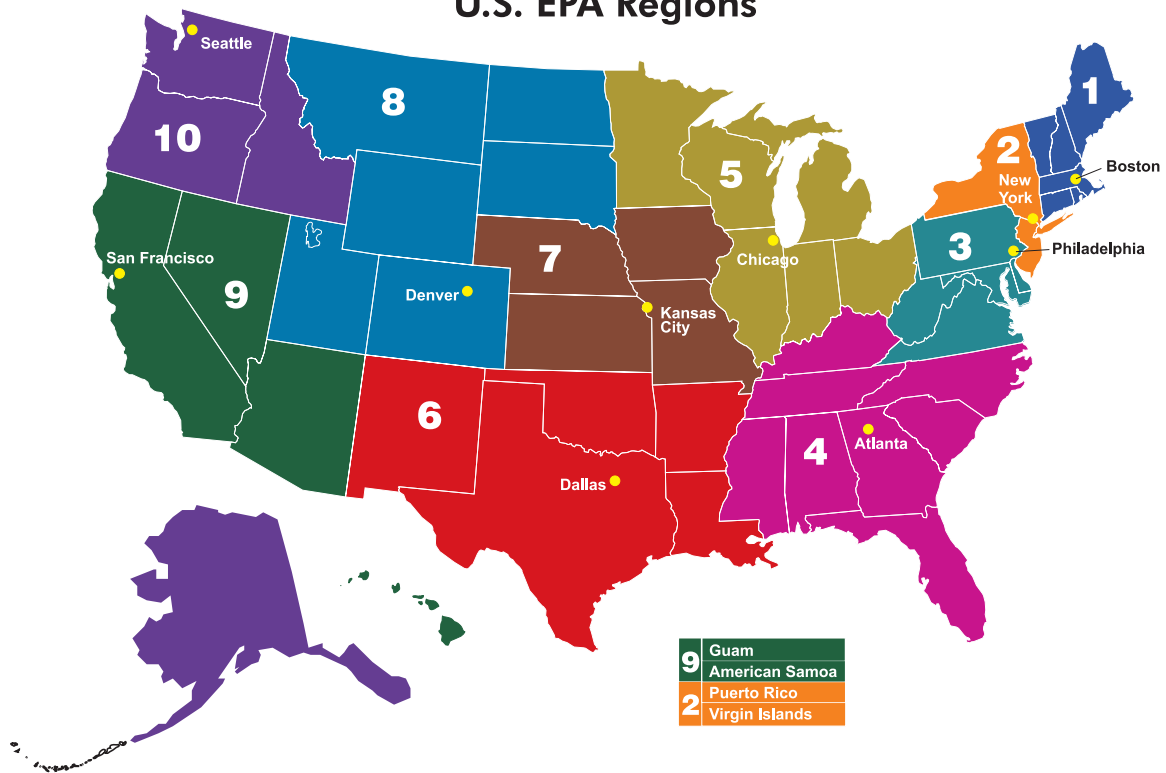
### Invasive Species

Nonindigenous, invasive species are now recognized as a major environmental threat capable of causing major adverse impacts on ecosystems, economies, and human health. They cost our country an estimated \$138 billion per year in economic losses and control costs alone. According to the National Estuary Programs, invasive species now constitute the largest single threat to the biological diversity of the world's coastal waters.



S. van Mechelen, Michael Kraak,  
University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands,  
courtesy of Mission Sea Grant

## U.S. EPA Regions



## U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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and Radiation

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Waste and  
Emergency Response

Office of Prevention,  
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Toxic Substances

Office of Research  
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Office of Wetlands, Oceans,  
and Watersheds

### Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds

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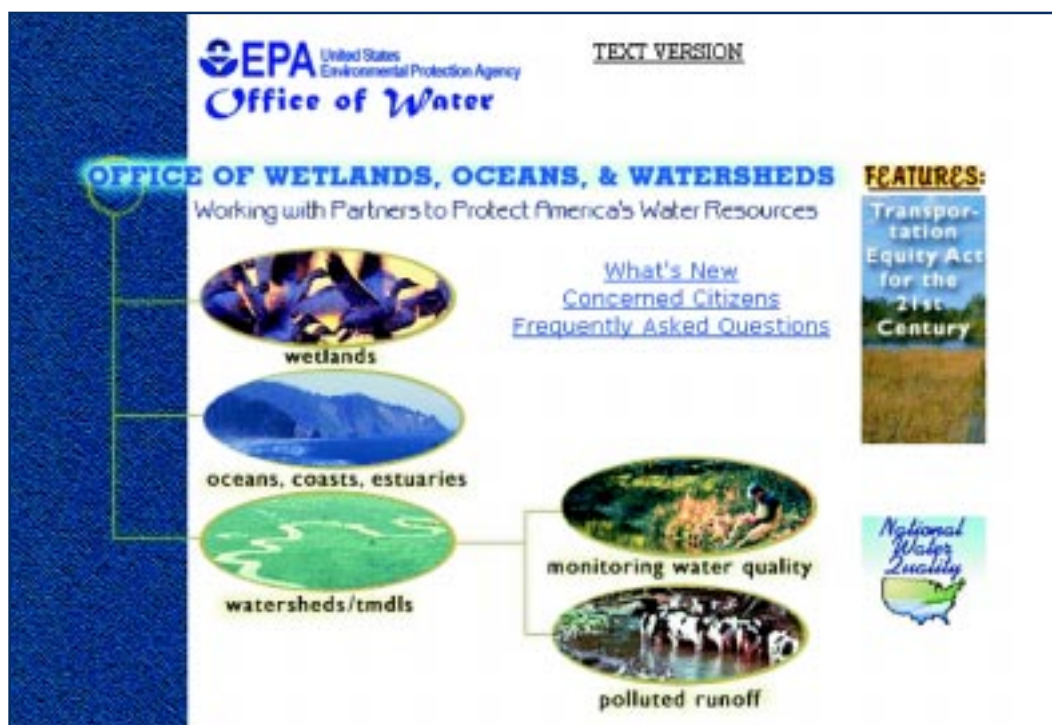
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Monitoring Branch





Visit OWOW's homepage at [www.epa.gov/owow](http://www.epa.gov/owow)

### Special Features



National Water Quality Inventory  
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Adopt Your Watershed  
[www.epa.gov/adopt](http://www.epa.gov/adopt)



Watershed Information Network  
[www.epa.gov/win](http://www.epa.gov/win)



TEA-21  
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Watershed Academy  
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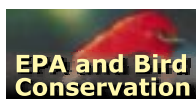
Restoration  
[www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/restore](http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/restore)



National Estuary Program  
[www.epa.gov/owow/estuaries](http://www.epa.gov/owow/estuaries)



Invasive Species  
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Bird Conservation  
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